

Town Meeting Coordinating Committee
Subcommittee on Policies and Procedures

September 6, 2016

MINUTES

Present: Chris Riddle, Chair; Jacqueline Maidana, Vice-Chair, Michael Greenebaum, Clerk; Maurianne Adams, John Hornik, Amber KaCey, Hind Mari, Adrienne Terrizzi

Absent: Janet McGcGowan

Guests: John Fox

Agenda

1. Review and approve August 23, 2016, minutes
2. Membership
3. Review 1997 Town Meeting Study Committee Report
4. Continue work on improvement projects.
5. Topics not anticipated 48 hours before meeting
6. Public Comment

The meeting was called to order at 4:37 by Chair Chris Riddle. Members introduced themselves and welcomed new member Hind Mari. Maidana reported on the Charter Commission meeting she attended.

The minutes of August 9, 2016, were reviewed and approved. Further meetings with Moderator would be welcomed.

The subcommittee agreed to find one or two proposals to improve Town Meeting to put on the Warrant for Fall Town Meeting. It was mentioned that October 17 is the date that the Select Board signs the Warrant, but that deadlines for submitting articles to them could not be found.

With that in mind, the subcommittee reviewed the 1997 Town Meeting Study, noting recommendations that had been accomplished and those that had not. Adams suggested that we consider whether Town Meeting is, in fact, a legislative body as it currently stands, and how does it conduct legislative business. Terrizzi asked whether separation of powers is indeed the current model of Amherst's government.

After considerable discussion the subcommittee identified four issues that might be included on the Fall Warrant and asked four members to develop statements for review at the next meeting.

1. Authorize the moderator to propose ending debate on a motion after (40) minutes subject to approval by Town Meeting. - Adams
2. Require 25 signatures for a citizen petition at both Annual and Fall Town Meetings - Hornik

3. Require the use of red and green cards, and add a white card for questions or other statements - Maidana
4. Making deadlines and other dates transparent - Terrizzi

In addition, the subcommittee identified issues that it wants actively to consider for possible future action

1. Equipment needs of Middle School Auditorium
2. Should town officials be expected or required to answer questions from Town Meeting members?
3. Separation of powers and the character of a legislature
4. Written Select Board positions, similar to Finance Committee
5. Minority positions included in reports and recommendations
6. Ex-officio members and voting
7. Time limits in Town Meeting
8. Increase number of Town Meeting sessions, with different focus for each
9. Increase number of floor mics

Three issues were raised for possible discussion with TMCC:

1. Warrant review
2. Bus tour
3. Precinct meetings

In all these cases, the issue of presentation of information vs advocacy should be reviewed.

The subcommittee will consider earlier starting times for its meetings as winter approaches.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.11 p.m. The next meeting will be at 4:30 on Tuesday, September 20, 2016. The major agenda item will be consideration of issues for Fall 2016 Warrant.

Michael Greenebaum
Clerk